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AUTHOR Fiebiger, Leo J.
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ABSTRACT

The design and implementation of a rotating class schedule which was put into effect in the Charlo High School, Charlo, Montana in September 1969 is discussed in this paper. The schedule, described in this report, consists of a 75-minute period followed by 2, 60-minute periods in the morning and 4, 45-minute afternoon periods. The program evaluation, made after the initial 3 weeks, is described; and negative and positive aspects of the rotating schedule are discussed. It is noted that the program should be a cooperative effort involving the students, the teachers, and the administration. An example of a class rotating schedule is presented. (PS)

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CHARLO CLASS SCHEDULING PLAN

Leo J. Fiebiger
New Mexico State University
Rocky Mountain Educational Research Assn.
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The acceptance and implementation of any new program takes a sincere effort on the part of all concerned. A rotating class schedule, the subject of this paper, was put into effect in the Charlo High School, Charlo, Montana, September 1969. This program could not have worked without the cooperation and planning of the teachers and students of that school system. Special thanks are extended to teachers Gene Nett and Bob Halgren who were instrumental in the adoption of the schedule.

Not unlike many similar small schools, the class schedule at Charlo High School had remained much the same for many years. The seven period schedule gave each teacher five preparations, a study hall, and a preparation period, commonly called a "free" period. It was necessary to conform to regulations from the Montana Department of Public Instruction and the Northwest Accreditation Association governing time and offerings. The prime consideration given in scheduling was to accommodate as many students as possible with the limited staff and facilities. With only nine teachers and 125 students, grades nine through twelve, usually no more than one section of any class could be offered.

Several problems concerning the schedule were evident during my first year as principal. Teachers and students wanted no solids or required classes taught either first period after lunch or the last period of the day. Unless special arrangements were made, the last period classes were the ones interrupted by such events as pep rallies, early dismissal for holidays, and special programs. For more than ten years the schedule had been set up with three one-hour classes in the morning and four forty-five-minute classes in the afternoon. Teachers of home economics, shop, and science laboratory classes disliked the shorter afternoon classes. During the 1968-69 school year several faculty members indicated there was a need to try a new approach.

Many of the alternatives considered either limited the students' options or conflicted with regulations. The idea of rotating the schedule each day was brought up; however, many teachers were skeptical. With the assistance of two staff members a feasible rotation method was worked out. The two teachers took the idea back to the staff and the principal discussed the program with the student council. In place of a formal meeting, it was decided that each staff member would be approached on an individual basis by the original planning teachers. All objections and criticisms were considered and methods of correcting undesired features were suggested. Finally a workable system was developed, acceptable to students and teachers.

At a staff meeting in late spring it was agreed that the following year a rotating schedule would be implemented on a trial basis. Students registered for fall classes in May as usual. This information was used by the principal in organizing three distinct class schedules. In addition to the rotating schedule, it would be necessary to have an alternative ready. During the

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workshop prior to school the teachers were presented the final schedule. The decision of the teachers was that AFTER school routine was established the rotation would be tried along with differential class length.

The basic outline is as follows:

Initially the program would be in effect fourteen days. This would be two complete rotations and give the program a reasonable chance.

The first session of the day would be one hour and fifteen minutes followed by two one-hour periods. The four afternoon periods would be approximately forty-five minutes in length.

The rotation would be such that the last class of the day would be first the next day. This would mean that students in such classes as shop and home economics would not have to put away projects since they would resume the next morning. In effect, this gave a two-hour block every six days for each class. (See Figure 1)

After the initial three weeks (two complete rotations) the evaluations were made. The student body expressed a desire to continue the program. A poll was conducted by the student newspaper and the student council was consulted. Both were in favor of the rotation. A faculty meeting was also held and problems were discussed. In voting by ballot the faculty agreed to continue the program. (There was only one opposing vote).

It is assumed by this writer that for this faculty and student population the rotating schedule was successful and acceptable. The program continued at the request of the faculty and students even during a change in administration. It must be reported by this writer that personal contact has been made with Charlo and the new administrator who began his duties in the fall of 1972 discontinued the program. The reasons were not discussed.

Negative aspects of the rotating schedule

Some teachers do not plan well enough to "fill" the 75 minute period.

The schedule is confusing if advance, long-range planning is required. (Example: A teacher wants a speaker for his class two months hence).

One teacher indicated difficulty adjusting to the ever-changing schedule.

It would have been impossible for students to work at a given time in a work-study program off the school campus. (This was not a factor in Charlo.)

If facilities for music and physical education are shared by both the elementary and secondary schools, the administrator must have schedules for those facilities that also change.

Positive aspects

The longest classes are in the morning when students and teachers are most alert.

No class is placed in an unfavorable hour for the entire year.

Interruptions such as assemblies, pep rallies, etc., do not take time from the same classes.

Both teachers and students indicated the rotation kept the morale up. To quote one teacher, "I used to think certain groups of students were bad, but now I feel it was just the hour I had them."

Conclusion

The implementation of this program was a cooperative effort with students, teachers, and administration. Without this aspect, there would have been no opportunity even to try the idea. The input from each group not only made the program more workable, but gave each a commitment to give the idea a fair chance.

	75 min.	60 min.	60 min.	Lunch	45 min.	45 min.	45 min.	45 min.
Monday	A	B	C		D	E	F	G
Tuesday	G	A	B		C	D	E	F
Wednesday	F	G	A		B	C	D	E
Thursday	E	F	G		A	B	C	D
Friday	D	E	F		G	A	B	C
Monday	C	D	E		F	G	A	B

Class Rotating Schedule

Figure 1